

REMARKS

This is in full and timely response the Office Action dated September 12, 2006. Reexamination in light of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3-5, 7, 9-10, 12-14, 16-19, and 21 are currently pending in this application, with claims 1 and 21 being independent. *No new matter has been added.*

Allowable subject matter

Appreciation is expressed for the indication within paragraph 5 that claims 4, 14 and 16-19 contain allowable subject matter.

Allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102 and 35 U.S.C. §103

Paragraph 2 of the Office Action indicates a rejection of claims 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 21 under 35 U.S.C. §102 as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application No. 2002/0064018 to Suzuki.

Paragraph 4 of the Office Action indicates a rejection of claims 10, 12 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly being unpatentable over Suzuki in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,871,060 to Strohmeier.

These rejections are traversed at least for the following reasons.

Claims 1, 3, 5, 7, 9-10, 12 and 13 - Claim 1 is drawn to a slide-type multi-directional input key comprising:

a key top which has an upper portion protruding from an insertion hole extending through an exterior member and a lower portion having a pushing member protruding

downwardly therefrom and which is capable of sliding in the direction of a hole inner surface of the insertion hole;

a plurality of contact input portions adapted to effect input upon receiving pressure from the pushing member when the key top is caused to slide; and

a key sheet formed of a rubber-like resilient material, the key sheet being adapted to support the key top so as to allow the key top to slide from the initial position in the direction of the hole inner surface of the insertion hole and in the return direction toward the initial position, the key sheet generating an elastic urging force whereby the key top returns automatically to the initial position,

wherein the one pushing member is in a central portion of the lower portion of the key top, and the pushing member can effect input through the plurality of the contact input portions,

wherein the key sheet is firmly attached to the key top and the exterior member.

Claim 21 - Claim 21 is drawn to a slide-type multi-directional input key comprising:

a key top including an upper portion protruding from an insertion hole extending through an exterior member and a lower portion having a pushing member protruding downwardly therefrom, the upper portion being adapted to slide toward a hole inner surface of the insertion hole;

a plurality of contact input portions adapted to effect input upon receiving pressure from the pushing member, the pushing member being adapted to slide toward at least one of the contact input portions; and

a flexible film having an exposure hole, the pushing member being adapted to come into contact with the hole inner surface of the exposure hole,

wherein the one pushing member is in a central portion of the lower portion of the key top, and the pushing member can effect input through the plurality of the contact input portions.

Suzuki - The Office Action contends that item 1 of Suzuki teaches the presence of a key top (Office Action page 2).

The Office Action further contends that item 1b of Suzuki teaches the presence of a lower portion having a pushing member (Office Action page 2).

Suzuki arguably teaches an input device wherein the slider 2 is made of, for example, a hard resin and is provided with a central fit hole 2b defined by an inner peripheral wall 2a which fits on a flange 5b of a coupling portion 5a of an elastic member 5 which will be described later (Suzuki at paragraph [0037]).

Suzuki arguably teaches that the *elastic member 5* is made of, for example, a *conductive rubber* which is electrically conductive over the entire part thereof (Suzuki at paragraph [0039]). Suzuki arguably teaches that the *movable electrode 5d* cooperates with a *later-mentioned fixed electrode 9* on the printed circuit board 6 in forming therebetween a predetermined electrostatic capacitance (Suzuki at paragraph [0044]).

Paragraph [0045] of Suzuki provides that:

The arrangement is such that, when the key top 1 is moved horizontally to the left or right for example, the inner peripheral wall 2a of the fit hole 2b of the slider 2 horizontally presses the flange 5b. As a result, the flange 5b and, hence, the movable electrode 5d on the elastic member 5 are deformed to cause a difference between the size of the gap 8 on the left-hand side and the size of the same gap on the right-hand side as viewed in FIG. 1, with the result that the electrostatic capacitance between the movable electrode 5d and the fixed electrode 9 is varied.

Suzuki arguably teaches that the fixed electrode 9 has a central circular first fixed electrode segment 9a and four equally sector-shaped second to fifth fixed electrode segments 9b to 9e arranged at a constant circumferential pitch later (Suzuki at paragraph [0046]).

Suzuki fails to disclose, teach, or suggest the fixed electrode 9 as being a plurality of contact input portions adapted to effect input upon receiving pressure from the alleged pushing member 1b when the alleged key top 1 is caused to slide.

Paragraph [0050] of Suzuki provides that an electrostatic capacitance of a predetermined capacitive value is formed between the movable electrode 5d and the fixed electrode 9 across the gap 8, and that the capacitance value is variable by horizontal movement of the key top 1 or by vertical movement of the vertical input portion 1b.

In this regard, Suzuki fails to disclose, teach, or suggest the fixed electrode 9 as being adapted to receive pressure from the alleged pushing member 1b.

Moreover, Suzuki fails to disclose, teach, or suggest the fixed electrode 9 as being adapted to receive pressure from the movable electrode 5d.

- *Thus, Suzuki fails to disclose, teach, or suggest a plurality of contact input portions adapted to effect input upon receiving pressure from the pushing member when the key top is caused to slide.*

Strohmeier - Strohmeier arguably teaches the presence of a car radio including a hand device.

- *However, Strohmeier fails to disclose, teach, or suggest a plurality of contact input portions adapted to effect input upon receiving pressure from the pushing member when the key top is caused to slide.*

Withdrawal of this rejection and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, all the claims now pending in the present application are allowable, and the present application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, favorable reexamination and reconsideration of the application in light of the amendments and remarks is courteously solicited.

If the Examiner has any comments or suggestions that could place this application in even better form, the Examiner is requested to telephone Brian K. Dutton, Reg. No. 47,255, at 202-955-8753.

If any fee is required or any overpayment made, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge the fee or credit the overpayment to Deposit Account # 18-0013.

Dated: December 12, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

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